



Matter raised during the Open Floor Hearing (OFH1 – 30th September 2022) by Boreham Parish Council (Cllr Linda Reed) relating to the increased levels of traffic on the 2 country lanes which are the only access routes to the proposed entrance of the Longfield Solar Farm.

Introduction:

Boreham Parish Council has raised concerns regarding traffic to and from the proposed Longfield Solar Farm site on previous occasions. We have questioned the suitability of the only 2 roads which serve the proposed site and their ability to absorb the additional traffic proposed by the developer, particularly during the implementation phase of the project. These roads are small country roads which are already heavily used. We are raising this issue again at the Open Hearing because we have noted, even since the commencement of the consultation process, that the use of these roads has increased significantly beyond the numbers represented in the DCO documents.

Traffic Issue:

The developer's preferred route to the Longfield site is via Cranham Road and Wheelers Hill. This is country lane which, even following the proposed widening is not deemed suitable for the type traffic anticipated during the implementation phase at Longfield. This route will also be impacted by the construction of the Chelmsford North East Bypass (CNEB). The only other route to the site is via Main Road, Boreham and Waltham Road. It is the stated intention of the developer not to use this route. However, it is likely that there will be times throughout the implementation phase and beyond where this will be necessary due to blockage, delay or temporary closure affecting the preferred route or other routes leading to it. These incidents do occur from time to time.

Both of the routes to the Longfield site are increasingly being effected by changing traffic patterns due to a number of other local and significant infrastructure projects such as the widening of the A12 and this is expected to continue with the proposed Chelmsford Garden Community Development. We are already experiencing increased levels of traffic on Waltham Road and Main Road. It is heavily used by workers during the week and there has been a marked increase in recreational use by pedestrians and cyclists at the weekend since the Covid lockdown. We expect this trend to continue. We anticipate the A12 widening and proposed closure of Junction 20 will drive additional traffic through Boreham, southbound on Main Road. This will increasingly delay traffic turning onto Main Road from Waltham Road, lengthening queues there.

The implementation phase in the developer's plan is phased and there is no specific time limit for the completion. It is likely implementation, and the associated traffic will last 3 years but it could be longer. The hours of operation during this time will be Monday to Saturday and 08.00 to 18.00 (subject to revision as discussed at the ISH1. The hours of operation suggest that there will be significant activity to and from the site during the rush hour. We understand that the anticipated (up to 75) HGVs will be instructed to access the site via the Cranham Road route and that site workers will be discouraged from travelling on Waltham Road during the rush hour. However, it is unclear how this will be enforced, particularly for the estimated 235 local workers.

Increasing traffic on these local routes to the extent anticipated in the Longfield DCO is a safety issue for other road users. It has the potential to delay emergency vehicles to the site and serving the community. It is our view that the issue of access to and from this site has always made the location unsuitable for a development of this magnitude.